

Christian Community

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The Christian Worker in America

By Cameron Parker Hall

Daily work is the way the individual goes about earning his livelihood. It is also the way society goes about getting done what it needs for its survival and development . . . Work is always, therefore, part of a social and cultural environment, which needs to be taken into account if Christians are to understand and give meaning to their work. Let us turn to a partial list of the more important characteristics of American life which bear on daily work.

1. *Ours is a relatively "open" society.* Occupationally our society is shot through with "social mobility." The occupation which an individual follows and his position in it are not fixed by rigid class or caste lines.

A notorious exception to this is the color line. In drawing it, white people have created a caste system. Impoverished circumstances tend to constitute classes as far as opportunities to develop individual capacities are concerned. Further, growth in the organized and specialized character of work life robs it

of some of its former openness. However, within these important but limited exceptions, from "rags to riches" and "log cabin to White House" are descriptive, although oversimplified, generalizations of the high mobility of American life.

An "open" society places upon the individual the heavy burden of how he is going to "rate." It accentuates self-reliance; it inspires ambition; it makes for freedom. On the other hand it puts a premium upon competitiveness; it fosters aggressiveness; it produces inner pressures through the fear of failure.

2. *Ours is an economy that depends upon money as the means of exchange.* A doctor gives an hour of his time in exchange for a fee, and the doctor's wife gives up part of the fee in exchange for meat and fruit and other foods. Money is also a measure of value. The wages a company pays its workers reveal its measure of what each worker is worth as an employee; similarly, the salary a college pays its president is its measure of the value of his service. The comparison between the laborer's wage and the college president's salary indicates in dollars and cents the "value" of their respective contributions. To complete the picture, by agreeing to work for the wage and by accepting the salary, laborer and college president signal, as it were, their acceptance of how they "rate," dollar-wise . . .

3. *Ours is a highly mechanized world of work.* Work today is largely centered in the machine . . . The centrality of the machine is shown in the wide use of such terms as "machine tender," "machinist," "mechanic," "machine



The meeting of human needs, even in non-mechanized and personal fields, reflects the highly organized and interdependent character of our society.

maintenance," and "operative." These point to the vast areas of daily work that feed the machine what it needs to keep going, that keep it in running order, and that apply it to the material or the process for which it is designed.

The tempo of daily work for millions is set by the rhythm of the machine; the environment of work is made impersonal through the sight and sound of machinery, assembly lines, levers, and gadgets; the safety of the worker depends upon split-second conformity to the inexorable demands of the machine; the worker's place becomes a part — a cog — in the mechanical process . . .

Machinery has, of course, its positive side; the vastly increased output from the work which men do; longer hours of leisure; the elimination of backbreaking tasks from workers themselves. On the other hand, machinery has gone far

As our contribution to the North American Lay Conference on the Christian and His Daily Work, held in Buffalo, N. Y., February 21-24, 1952, and also to further discussion of the nature of our economic system, Christian Community reprints portions of Chapter two, "The Christian As a Worker" from the pamphlet "The Christian at His Daily Work", by permission of the author, Cameron Parker Hall. These seven characteristics of the American economy are worthy of careful study by individuals and church groups.

to depersonalize daily work and to dehumanize the worker.

4. *Ours is a highly organized and interdependent society.* Acting alone, most individuals can achieve but little through their daily work. We have recognized this interdependence *in terms of need*: we are dependent upon the work of others for what we want. It has been recognized *in terms of the opportunity to work*: getting and keeping a job hangs on the nod of another, who may be taking orders from others. According to the 1950 census, 78 per cent of those gainfully employed worked for someone else. This dependence needs to be recognized also *in terms of the results of our work*. This aspect of work today is the thesis of a recent book by a student of modern industrial society.

"In an industrial society . . . only a very small minority of artists and professional men can produce at all by themselves. All the others are dependent upon access to an organization to be productive. It is the *organization* rather than the individual which is productive in an industrial society . . . The worker by himself can not produce. He must have access to that highly complex organization of men, machines, and tools we call a plant . . . In fact, the worker no longer produces, even in the plant; he works. But the product is not being turned out by any one worker or any one group of workers. It is being turned out by the plant. It is a *collective* product . . . If it is the organization rather than the worker which produces, then social status, social prestige and social power cannot attach to the individual's *work*. They can only attach to the individual's *job*. They can flow only from his membership, status, prestige and power within the organization." (Italics as in original from *The New Society*, by Peter F. Drucker, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1951, pp. 5-7. By permission.)

This dependence of the individual in his daily work extends far beyond what is commonly thought of as industry. The filing clerk in an insurance office, the scientist in a research laboratory, the teacher no longer in a one-room red

schoolhouse, the reporter on a metropolitan paper, the clerk behind a department store counter, the worker in a factory — these have only a part in the final product or service which they by themselves cannot produce, nor is what they do usually identifiable in the final product itself . . .

5. *As a people we have extolled daily work as a basis of the good life.* From the start of our national history, daily work was a necessity for survival; settlements had to be carved out of the wilderness and harvests reaped from hitherto uncultivated soil. But we went beyond making a virtue out of work's necessity. Work was carried on with a zest and hopefulness that had not characterized the daily toil in the countries from which settlers and immigrants came. The vast natural resources of our continent were undeveloped. In changing a virgin continent into a highly industrial nation, work had a pioneering character, a challenge to the imaginative and creative side of man's nature. Beyond that it seemed to hold out the promise of generous and speedy prizes. Also, the vast number of those who came to our shores were from nations upon whose people had been stamped the invigorating religious view which the Reformation gave to daily work . . .

6. *Ours is a war economy.* True, we are committed to engage in war only in defense. But we are also committed as a national policy to be ready to wage total war if necessary, world-wide in scope and ultra-modern in its weapons. The work which men do today is widely and deeply war-oriented; whatever may be the motive of the worker today, the socially determined result of his work contributes in some way to an increased readiness for waging war. This is not limited to those wearing a uniform nor to civilians in government positions. Few work situations today are untouched by the pervasive character of preparations for war.

7. *We are a people committed to democracy.* Democracy has never been a static theory, primarily because it is of the human spirit. It captured the political citadel early in our history. It has

since been storming the social citadel. It is a powerful force in the world of work and jobs.

Highly characteristic of a democracy is a concern for equality. Americans have made equality an absolute in terms of the franchise: "One man, one vote." In the area of daily work, they have been *highly sensitive to serious inequality*. Jobs with power or authority through the control of wealth come under close scrutiny. Serious disparities in the rewards of work that threaten the workers' opportunities for health, education, and housing are also critically viewed.

With these seven characteristics of the American scene our list comes to a close; not because it is exhaustive, but because it points to strong forces in American life impinging upon the pattern of daily work. While for reasons of clarity these several elements have been treated separately, the bearing of each upon the others is the key to their full importance. The fact that ours is a money economy colors the standards of "success", and the drive for "success" is a characteristic pressure in an "open" society. Money as a symbol of social power lends a materialistic coloring to men's judgment of others which in turn runs counter to the spiritual value of the individual upon which democracy rests. Again, the methods upon which democracy depends — persuasion, compromise, and respect for those who differ — are set over against the military basis for human relations with its reliance upon authoritarianism, force, and the destruction of those who oppose. The resolving of these conflicts within the values of American life enter prominently into the decisions in which daily work involves the Christian. . . .

In This Issue

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International Relations Letter

January 7, 1952

The Disarmament Discussions

From a memo prepared for me by Dr. Richard M. Fagley I want to lift a few key points — things we ought to keep in mind in watching the United Nations' discussions on disarmament.

"The basic issue in the present impasse is not the technical difficulty nor the political obstacles, difficult as these are. The basic issue is a moral and spiritual problem: the tragic distrust which corrodes all East-West relationships — and the lack of common moral principles, which is the fundamental reason for this distrust . . . We need to stress a long-range approach on a broad front, an approach designed to develop every opportunity for constructive co-operation with the Russians and also strengthen the position of the West by demonstrating its peaceful intentions. It seems probable that several partial settlements at least will have to take place before there can be any successful negotiations on disarmament . . . It needs to be said that in this field *no temporary setbacks or failures can be accepted as final*, and that persevering efforts to find acceptable common ground are essential in any responsible policy."

Dr. Fagley makes another very important point. He says that we must try to understand "the legitimate (as contrasted with the illegitimate) concerns of the Kremlin in any effective plan for limiting and controlling armaments." We have to remember that the Soviet Union is "in a minority position in the world." If we need safeguards against any departure from disarmament agreements on the part of the Soviet Union, so also does the Soviet Union, from its point of view, have to have safeguards that the majority will not take advantage of its majority position. We must not and cannot expect, just because we are sure of our good intentions, that

the Soviet Union will trust us. Regardless of the balance of right and wrong on the two sides, the simple fact is that we shall get no disarmament agreement unless the Russians have iron-clad assurances that the non-communist nations will not use the agreements to secure advantages for themselves. Says Dr. Fagley, "The only way I can see to guard against misuse of its powers by the majority would be to spell out in advance and in considerable detail the principles on which the control system would operate."

In connection with armaments, as in other aspects of the relations between Russia and the West, we have to try to maintain two immensely difficult attitudes; to be alive to the real menace of Russian purposes without becoming self-righteously adamant about our proposals and viewpoints; to understand that, along with her illegitimate purposes, Russia has legitimate concerns and worries when she negotiates with the West.

42 Million Children

People who speak disparagingly of the United Nations rarely know much about the organization. It helps to have a few facts at one's fingertips. For example: By the time the current programs of the U. N. International Emergency Children's Fund have been carried out the agency will have helped at least 42 million children. Since 1946, 20 million children have been given food, clothing and medical aid. Six hundred thousand children have been cured of the disease of yaws, at a cost of 40 cents per child. It's not difficult, if you're interested, to marshal many pages of facts like this. And the skeptics need to hear them. But what about Korea and the cold war? There is not space here to give adequate answer. Let's say only this: U. N. action in

Korea is not a failure. Far from it! For the first time in history, real collective action has stopped an aggressor in his tracks. The aggression has not succeeded! And it has failed because of the U. N. That's the point! General MacArthur notwithstanding, the purpose of the fighting is not "victory" — complete, all-out victory that leaves both sides in near-chaos. The purpose of the fighting is to stop the aggressor. It's that simple.

Material on Point Four

Point Four Pioneers — Reports from a New Frontier. 36 pages. Department of State Publication 4279. Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. 20c

Splendid material for talks in adult or young people's organizations.

Point Four — What It Is and How It Operates. 14 pages. Published July, 1951, by the Technical Cooperation Administration, Department of State, Washington, D.C. Free.

The number of Point IV projects in operation, the number of technicians in the field, the countries where Point IV is operating, etc., together with some samples of Point IV at work.

If Not You, Perhaps a Friend

Don't forget next summer's C. S. A. European Seminar! Several people have already signed up. Write for the descriptive folder. Forty-five days in Western Europe, including Yugoslavia, under experienced leadership, hearing about 65 speakers, having innumerable conversations — and all this in the congenial company of a group of fellow Christians! Perhaps you could stretch things a bit and go yourself. If not, tell someone else.

A Few Questions

Have you let your Senators know what you think of the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican? The decision to start, or not to start, UMT will be momentous. What has your church done about that? Are you keeping up a steady effort to help people understand why Point IV is absolutely essential and exactly what the plan is?

Herman F. Reissig

Social Action Comes to Orrville

By Barbara Bowman

Social action has hit the community of Orrville, Ohio, head-on! It is being felt in every phase of community life and on every level of its society, due to a group of women belonging to the Orrville branch of the American Association of University Women.

It's a long, sordid story of a small community of 5,000 in the heart of Ohio's finest agricultural county which was "invaded" some thirty years ago by a group of illiterate Negroes from the deep south. These folk were brought there by a wood preserving company who provided them with factory-owned, rent-free shacks called "quarters". It was more or less of a shock to the community who had never before experienced another race living in the town their fathers had built.

Over the years, other plants were established which also attracted Negro labor. The only houses available to them were almost unfit for occupancy in the most undesirable sections of town. Social barriers were raised to keep the Negro from associating. An unwritten law closed the swimming pool to Negroes before it was built. Recreational facilities were barred. All this in a community which six miles out, at the intersection of Routes 94 and 5, erected a large sign reading, "6 miles to Orrville, a friendly city, excellent schools and churches, business and industrial opportunities, a good place to live".

Aroused by the unjust "tradition" and mores of the community the A. A. U. W. decided to adopt a program of study for 1951 that would bring to light the minority problems in Orrville.

The study was launched in September with the film, "The Challenge", developed by the White House Conference on Children and the report of the President's committee on Civil Rights. Orrville's problems were listed and a program of action planned.

In October, Rev. Jefferson P. Rogers, Race Relations Secretary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, in sharp-

ly-pointed, conscience-needling sentences roused in the group a sense of moral responsibility to the whole community of which they were a part. Through the advice of Mr. Rogers and Harold Freedlander of Wooster's citizen's committee, the Cleveland Urban League was asked to make a survey of the situation. This was done most efficiently in two days by Arnold Walker, Director of the Cleveland Urban League, and his two assistants, Raymond Brown, Director of the Akron Urban League, and DeHart Hubbard, Race Relations Director of the Cleveland branch of FHA. They talked with factory superintendents, town officials including the mayor, chairmen of local committees, such as, Community Chest, Chamber of Commerce, and Recreation, school board members, president of the ministerial association and interested citizens.

The survey pointed up the following problems:

- 1) Housing. "Dilapidated shacks of flimsy construction covered with tar paper surrounding a water spigot and indescribable outhouses."
- 2) No recreational facilities available to Negroes except to those playing on white teams.
- 3) No dental services to Negroes regardless of suffering.
- 4) Denial of use of tax-supported facilities, such as park and swimming pool.

The survey recommended:

- 1) A continuing group, such as A. A. U. W., to spearhead action.
- 2) A citizens' committee representing all races, creeds, faiths, appointed by the mayor.
- 3) A qualified Negro on the Recreation Commission.
- 4) A special committee of industrialists, town fathers, and civic leaders to work on housing.
- 5) More dentists drawn into the community who will serve all.

A month has passed since this report was made. The following progress is worth noting:

- 1) Five members of the A. A. U. W. have met with the mayor who has promised to form a citizens' committee.
- 2) DeHart Hubbard will speak to Rotary in January on low-rental housing under FHA.
- 3) The Recreation Center, open to all, is the "talk of the town".
- 4) The ministers have agreed to co-operate through preaching and teaching brotherhood.
- 5) Two Negro boys are being offered an opportunity to attend an "E and R" college.

The spirit of the compassionate Christ is moving in this town and when the story is finished the community will be released to a new way of life "of freedom and justice for all", thanks to a group of women with vision.

CC's Stress CSA

February is the "Month of Emphasis" upon the work of the Council for Social Action in the Congregational Christian Churches. Special attention is given in the February "Facts from the Field" to the current program of CSA. A leaflet containing pictures and information about the Board of Directors and Staff, "Meet Your CSA," is available for wide distribution. Above all, it is the period when the many friends of the Council send their special gifts to further its support. These gifts are an essential part of the CSA income. They also count toward the local church support of Our Christian World Mission.

Over 650 Congregational Christian Churches have secured copies and the Group Leaders Manual for study of the draft statement, "Christian Faith for a World in Crisis". This widespread study is an unusual and additional expense to the CSA this year. Gifts of Congregational Christian members in February will help support this significant, church-wide study of the Christian Basis for Social Action.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Additional copies may be obtained for 2 cents each. Requests from Congregational Christians should be addressed to Ray Gibbons, Director, Council for Social Action, 289 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York. Requests by Evangelical and Reformed, and others, as well as news items and communications, should be addressed to the Editor, Huber F. Klemme, Commission on Christian Social Action, 2969 West 25th Street, Cleveland 13, Ohio